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# **Spain: Drugs and Government Response**

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**A Research Paper**

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*EUR 86-10034  
September 1986*

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# **Spain: Drugs and Government Response**

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**A Research Paper**

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**Spain:  
Drugs and  
Government Response**

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**Summary**

*Information available as  
of 1 August 1986 was  
used in this report.*

Spain has long served as a transshipment point for illicit drugs bound for Western Europe and the United States, but the level of drug abuse, trafficking, and related crime recently reached alarming proportions. Upon coming into office the Socialist government of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez immediately softened the draconian Franco-era laws against possession and use of drugs and was then unwilling to admit that drug-related problems were becoming severe. In the past two years, pressure from the public and the political opposition, growing media attention, and the marked increase in drug abuse and trafficking have forced Madrid to accord the narcotics issue a higher priority.

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Since the possession of drugs for personal use was decriminalized in 1983, the use of marijuana and hashish has become widespread. In recent years Spain has also experienced a dramatic increase in cocaine and heroin addiction; it now has the second-largest heroin addict population among major West European countries.

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The narcotics trade has also flourished. According to INTERPOL, Spain has become the principal entry point of South American cocaine bound for the West European market. A large volume of Moroccan and Middle Eastern marijuana and hashish also transits the country, as does heroin from Southwest Asia. US Embassy and press reporting indicates that this illicit trade is controlled by international drug trafficking networks linked to drug-producing countries, but some Spaniards, West Europeans, and US citizens are also involved. In addition, recent reports have confirmed Mafia involvement in trade and money laundering.

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In July 1985 the government adopted a national plan to strengthen enforcement measures and improve prevention and treatment programs. The government has also allocated an additional \$32 million to counter the threat, and a police reform law was passed earlier this year designed to improve coordination among law enforcement units. Pending bills calling for tougher penalties against drug dealers and the seizure of their assets will also go far toward strengthening the government's hand.

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Spain also has increased its cooperation with other countries, particularly the United States. Better coordination and cooperation between Spanish law enforcement agencies responsible for narcotics interdiction and their European counterparts as well as with the US Drug Enforcement Administration have resulted in several important seizures, the destruction

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September 1986

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of cannabis crops and cocaine and heroin processing labs, and the arrest of several major drug traffickers. Public opinion polls show that Spaniards favor additional government measures to combat hard drugs and drug-related problems, although there is little support for the proscription of hashish and marijuana. [REDACTED]

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Although the government's recent actions suggest that it is committed to combating the narcotics threat, the strong demand and growing worldwide surplus of drugs, the ingenuity and tenacity of drug traffickers, budget constraints, and competing priorities are likely to continue to hamper the overall campaign. To some extent, the combination of international assistance and pressure, particularly from the United States, will strengthen Madrid's willingness and ability to confront the problem. Progress will be slow and halting, however, and Spain is likely to remain a major transshipment point for drugs bound for Western Europe and the United States for some time. [REDACTED]

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**Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
Summary	iii
Introduction	1
The Abuse Problem	1
Trafficking	4
Public Perceptions of the Drug Problem	7
Domestic Control Policies	7
Strengthened Control Measures	7
Mixed Results	10
International Cooperation	12
Outlook and Implications for the United States	13





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## Spain: Drugs and Government Response

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### Introduction

Spain, like most other West European countries, has experienced a dramatic increase in drug abuse, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime in the past decade and especially in the past few years.<sup>1</sup> Spain's Franco-era legacy included one of Western Europe's toughest policies on drug abuse and trafficking. Users and traffickers were considered immoral and decadent by the puritanical Franco regime and were punished accordingly. Penalties for drug possession for use or for sale carried lengthy maximum sentences, and offenders were frequently subjected to police interrogations and interminable detention. The gradual liberalization of the Spanish society in the 1970s, particularly following the restoration of democratic rule, and the accession of power of the Socialist government of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez in 1982 prompted Madrid to adopt one of the most lenient positions on drugs. Legislation was passed to decriminalize the use of drugs and "humanize" the penal code, and, as of July 1983, possession of drugs for personal use was no longer a crime. Laws relating to preventive detention and probationary release also were relaxed. It is still illegal to cultivate, manufacture, or traffic in drugs or to possess these substances for such purposes, but the 1983 legislation does not distinguish between amounts that can be held for "personal use" and amounts that constitute trafficking. This determination is made on an individual basis by the presiding magistrate as cases are brought before the court.

Since 1983, consumption of marijuana and hashish has soared; heroin and cocaine use has also increased dramatically as Spaniards have begun experimenting

with these more readily available drugs. Spain's role in the drug trade has changed markedly as well during this period, because traffickers viewed the 1983 policy shift as an indication that they could transship or sell drugs with relative impunity. Larger quantities of heroin from Southwest Asia, cocaine from South America, and Moroccan and Middle Eastern cannabis products are crossing Spanish borders, judging by increased seizures by law enforcement authorities. Much of the narcotics entering the country is destined for other West European countries, particularly the Netherlands, and for the United States.

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The growing seriousness of Spain's drug problem and charges of government laxity have prompted the Gonzalez government—previously concerned almost exclusively with the threat caused by separatist and terrorist groups—to devote more attention and resources to this issue and to move away from its liberal policies. Despite the government's recent policy shift, however, illicit drug consumption, trafficking, and drug-related crime in Spain remain high. Moreover, official measures to combat the problem have not yet been fully implemented. This study looks at recent narcotics consumption and control policies in Spain, including efforts by Madrid to reduce narcotics supply and demand, its involvement in international attempts to curb consumption and trafficking, and the obstacles it is likely to encounter.

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**The Abuse Problem.** Although Embassy reporting indicates that Spain began to experience a significant drug abuse problem in the mid-1970s, it did not become serious until the mid-1980s. As Spaniards developed an awareness of the conditions in other Western countries and were introduced to drugs by the tourists crossing their borders and by Spanish students who had been living abroad, drug use became more socially acceptable, and many developed a desire to experiment as part of the new liberalism

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following the restoration of democratic rule. In addition, extensive unemployment among youth and the increased availability and decreasing prices of drugs prompted many Spaniards to turn to drugs. Leaders of the political opposition also blame the Socialists for the surge because of their easing of the legal barriers to narcotics possession. In any case, drug abuse, addiction, and resulting deaths have reached what many observers describe as epidemic proportions. Spain now has the second-largest addict population among the five largest West European countries, both in absolute terms and on a per capita basis (see table 1). [ ]

Embassy officials believe that official Spanish estimates of drug use, addiction rates, and overdose deaths represent only part of the picture. Overdose deaths, for example, are not always properly reported because medical personnel are not trained to deal with drug problems and sometimes conceal the true cause of such deaths in order to save the victim's family from embarrassment. In addition, Spanish medical institutions are not required to report statistics on use, addiction rates, or overdose deaths to the government. [ ]

In any case, a government-funded drug abuse study released in March 1985, which Spanish officials consider authoritative, concluded that over 4 million Spaniards, or about 10 percent of the population, use drugs. The study reports that 3.7 million Spaniards use derivatives of cannabis and more than 1 million take amphetamines. According to another major study published in 1985, abuse of *marijuana* and *hashish*, in particular, increased after the possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use was decriminalized in 1983. [ ]

*Heroin* abuse is also on the rise. In the mid-1970s, when abuse of hard drugs was socially unacceptable and entailed greater risk of punishment, health and government officials estimated only some 500 people, mostly foreigners, were addicted to heroin. The estimated number of addicts has increased dramatically in recent years as hard drug use has become widespread, although the extent of the rise probably also reflects better statistics. By 1982, Spanish officials

**Table 1**  
**Heroin Addicts in Western Europe, 1984**

*Number  
of people*

	Number	Rate per Thousand
Italy	180,000-240,000	3.5
Spain	80,000-100,000	2.6
United Kingdom	60,000	1.1
West Germany	50,000-55,000	0.9
France <sup>a</sup>	16,000-19,000	0.4

<sup>a</sup> We believe the very low addiction rate for France is because of the tendency of French officials to play down the severity of the problem.

Source: West European health and government officials.

estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 people were addicted to the drug. The estimated number of addicts rose to between 80,000 and 100,000 in 1984 and reached 185,000 by 1985. In the Basque provinces, a region with one of the most serious drug problems, officials estimated that there were 11,000 to 13,000 heroin addicts in 1984. [ ]

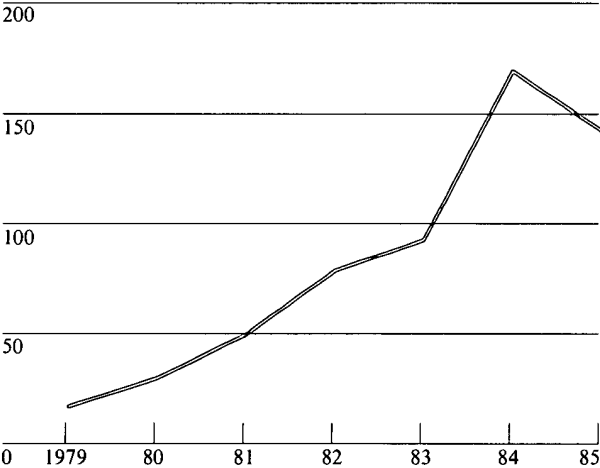
*Cocaine* abuse is a more recent phenomenon in Spain but it, too, has increased dramatically in recent years. In 1978, when cocaine was not readily available, Spanish officials estimated that between 1,000 and 2,000 persons used the drug. In 1985 the Health Ministry reported that approximately 80,000 Spaniards were addicted to cocaine, while the March 1985 medical study estimated that over 400,000 Spaniards used the drug. [ ]

As drug abuse has increased, the number of drug-related deaths has also risen. Government figures made available to DEA officials indicate that 79 deaths were attributed to drug overdose in 1982, 93 deaths in 1983, and 170 in 1984. Overdose deaths were down to 143 in 1985, however, suggesting that the stepped-up prevention and control efforts are beginning to have an effect (see figure 1). [ ]

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**Figure 1**  
**Drug Abuse in Spain: Estimated**  
**Drug-Related Deaths, 1979-85**



Source: Spanish law enforcement agencies.

The increase in drug consumption and addiction has produced a marked increase in drug-related crime. The number of those arrested for trafficking, possession, and use increased from nearly 9,000 in 1978 to over 11,000 in 1982, and the trend is again upward after a slight drop in 1983 when the government temporarily took a more relaxed view of drug abuse (see figure 2). According to press reports, the Interior Minister, Jose Barrionuevo Pena, and police officials estimate that between 75 and 80 percent of serious crime in Spain is now drug related. This includes, in addition to trafficking and possession, muggings and robberies to finance drug purchases as well as pharmacy thefts and holdups to obtain drugs. Although individual policemen have been arrested for trafficking offenses and rumors circulate that some law enforcement officials and judges have been bribed, the scale of corruption is relatively low, according to Embassy reporting.

**Drug Abuse and Trafficking in the Armed Forces**

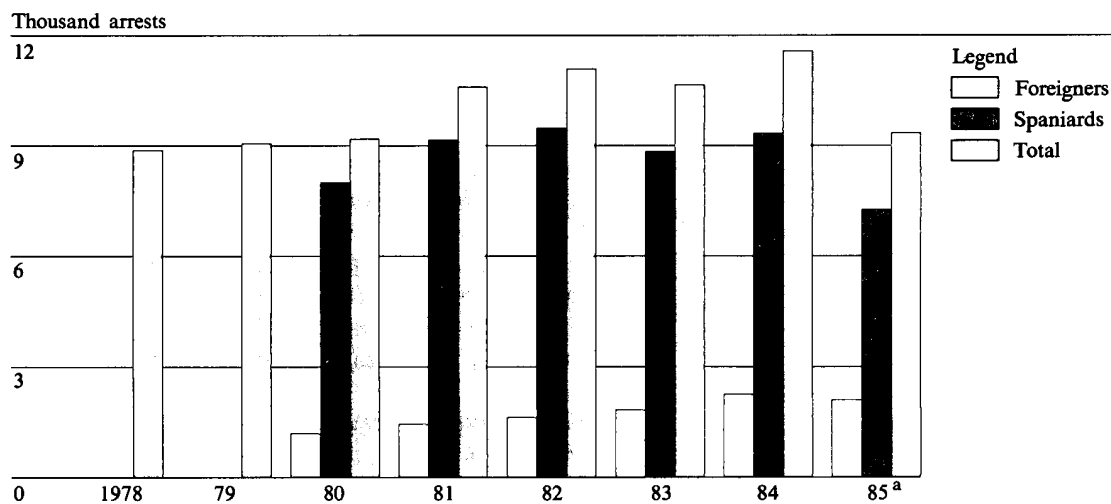
The Spanish Ministry of Defense is very concerned that drug abuse in the armed forces is posing a serious threat to Spain's national security. According to a study by the Commission for the Prevention and Control of Drugs in the Army released in April 1984, the Spanish armed forces in 1983 had more than 6,000 drug traffickers and some 150,000 drug users (almost half of all servicemen). The study indicated that the number of regular users in the services approached 50,000. The study also stated that 1,400 soldiers were treated at military hospitals for drug dependence or poisoning in 1983 and that almost 1,000 of them were discharged from the service.

The Defense Ministry states that it is difficult to crack down on drug peddling and use in the armed forces because there is a gap in the military's legal code. According to press reporting, the Commission has informed military units to apply Article 443 of the Code of Military Justice to drug users, which recommends a 15-day prison sentence for the first drug offense, 30 days for the second offense, and two months for third-time offenders. In addition, there is no specific military legislation for drug peddling inside the barracks or by military personnel, and the courts must resort to the civilian penal code. US Embassy officials report that military chiefs have the political will to combat drug and alcohol abuse in their commands, but that they lack money and trained personnel. although the original plan to combat military drug and alcohol abuse comprised screening military conscripts, security inspections, and education/counseling, only the first two measures are being implemented with any frequency. In addition, screening military conscripts is inadequate because military personnel frequently develop drug abuse problems during their career.

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**Figure 2**  
**Number of Arrests for Drug-Related Offenses, By Nationality, 1978-85**



Source: Spanish law enforcement agencies.

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**Trafficking.** Spanish officials acknowledge that their country has served increasingly in the last few years as a transshipment point for illicit drugs destined for European and North American markets. According to US Embassy reporting, Spain has become the most important point for narcotics entering Europe. DEA and Embassy officials note several reasons for the dramatic increase:

- As other West European countries such as West Germany and Italy have improved their antinarcotics efforts and customs procedures, resilient traffickers have altered their routes accordingly.
- The laxity of the new laws pertaining to drug possession has encouraged traffickers to look to Spain as a convenient port of call.
- Lax border controls along Spain's long coastline enable traffickers to smuggle drugs into the country with little fear of being caught.
- Traffickers can easily hide among the more than 40 million visitors to Spain each year.

- Spain's extensive airline connections facilitate trafficking.

International trafficking rings moved quickly to exploit these conditions, as shown by the major increase in the volume of cocaine and heroin seized in recent years and by the dramatic increase in the volume of cannabis seized last year following the government's policy shift on drugs. In the first 10 months of 1985, more than 250 kilograms of heroin and some 300 kilograms of cocaine were seized, compared with 109 and 275 kilograms, respectively, in 1983. Cannabis seizures, over 60,000 kilograms in 1985, were triple the 1983 figure (see table 2). Despite the increase in seizures, Spanish and INTERPOL officials believe that the quality and quantity of narcotics transiting Spain undetected have continued to grow, probably because traffickers have devised new methods to smuggle cocaine and heroin into the country.

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**Table 2**  
**Spain: Narcotics Seized, 1978-85**

Kilograms

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985 <sup>a</sup>
Cannabis	7,090	18,760	11,221	20,874	27,626	20,843	15,950	62,247
Heroin	NA	NA	6	34	68	109	203	253
Cocaine	15	46	58	47	114	275	277	303

<sup>a</sup> First 10 months.

Source: Spanish law enforcement agencies.



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According to DEA and Embassy reporting, most of the illicit *heroin* arriving in Spain originates in Southwest Asia, primarily Pakistan and Afghanistan, but some also comes from Southeast Asia. Heroin normally arrives by rail from Portugal, France, the Netherlands, and Italy, while some also enters directly by air from source countries. From here, multikilo-size parcels are assembled for shipment, mainly to the United States (see figure 3).

Spain has become the principal entry point of South American *cocaine* destined for the West European market, according to INTERPOL. It is favored as the initial transshipment point because of its language, historical, and cultural ties to Latin America as well as its dual-nationality arrangements with some Latin American countries. DEA and Embassy reporting indicates that cocaine in bulk quantities arrives by courier directly from South America, mainly Bolivia and Colombia, while some also is smuggled across the Spanish-Portuguese border. DEA reports that recent surpluses in Bolivia and other South American countries explain the big push to develop European markets. Much of the cocaine arriving in Spain is bound for the Netherlands, where it is packed for distribution to other European countries.

According to Embassy reporting, *hashish* and other *cannabis products* in bulk quantities arrive in Spain by private fishing and pleasure boats, private planes, and commercial aircraft from Morocco and the Middle East. Entry areas include the coastline near

Gibraltar, such as Algeciras; the many small ports along the Costa del Sol, such as Puerto Banus and Marbella; and the border with Portugal. Traffickers then send them by rail and truck to other European countries and by plane and ship to the United States.



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Drug trafficking in Spain involves people of many nationalities. Embassy reporting indicates that, until recently, Spanish and US citizens were primarily involved in local distribution and small-scale smuggling, while individuals or small groups from drug-producing countries and other West European states were involved in smuggling on a larger scale. DEA reporting indicates that the growth of Iranian, Syrian, and Lebanese communities in Spain in recent years has led to an increase in the number of heroin distribution organizations and courier activity among these nationalities. More formally organized trafficking networks involving Spanish, Italian, and South American citizens have also been uncovered recently. In addition, trafficking rings involving Sri Lankan Tamils, Nigerians, and British citizens are also active, while press reports last November indicated that law enforcement authorities were investigating a ring allegedly smuggling heroin through the Syrian diplomatic pouch.

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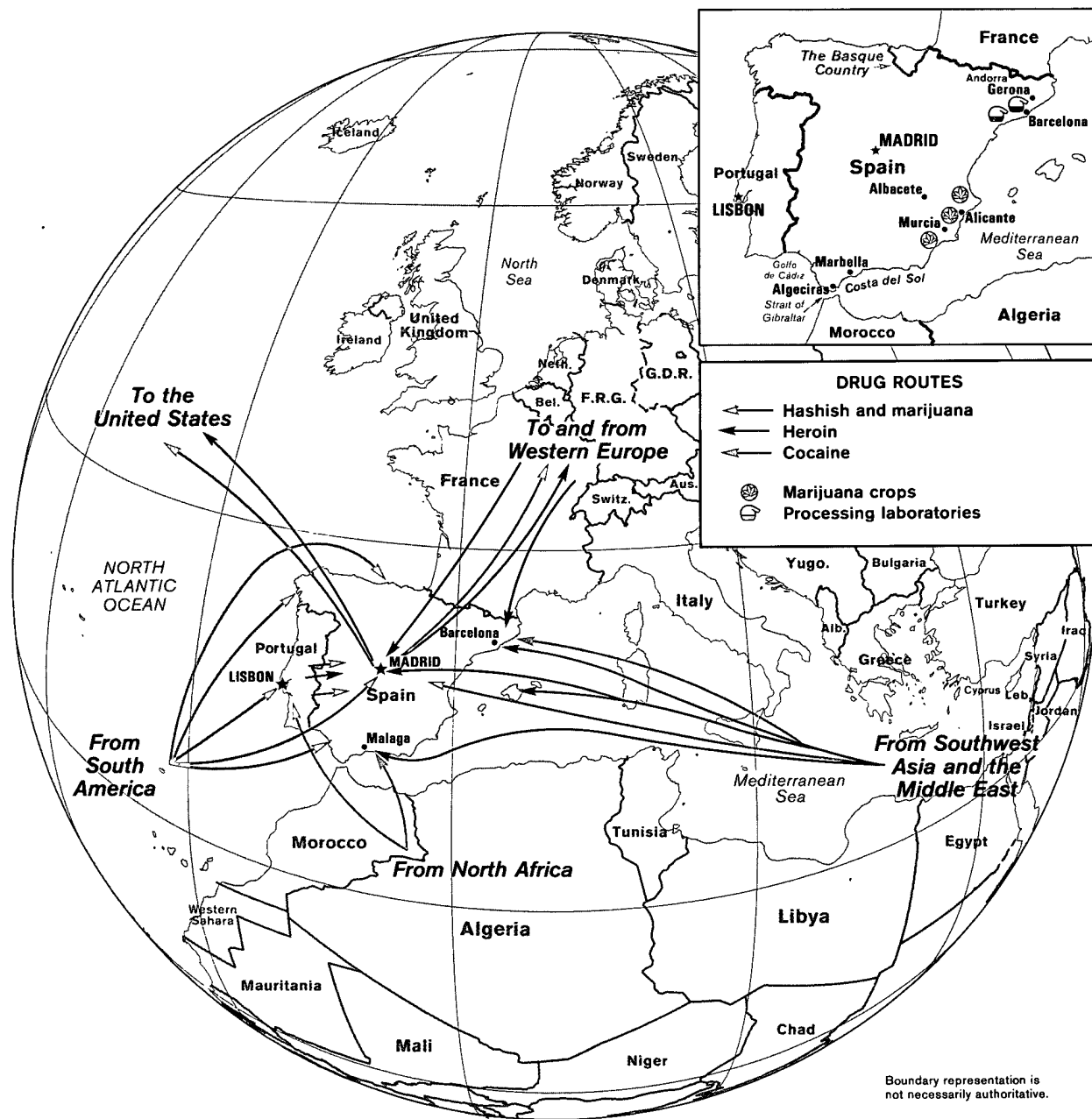
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Mafia connections with trafficking became apparent in April 1984 when Spanish officials arrested Mafia chieftains Gaetano and Vito Badalamenti and Pietro

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**Figure 3**  
**Drug Trafficking Routes and Cultivation Areas in Spain**



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Alfano for drug trafficking. In addition, evidence was uncovered that Mafia figures were using Spain as a money-laundering center. According to Italian police reports cited in the Italian and Spanish press, the Mafia money is laundered by investing in real estate along Spain's Mediterranean coast through legal transfers of funds from Swiss, French, and Italian banks. [redacted]

In November 1984, Spanish authorities also arrested in Madrid two major Colombian traffickers, Jorge Ochoa Vasquez and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela. Both men were extradited to Columbia in mid-July despite Washington's efforts to have them extradited to the United States to face trafficking charges. In addition, press reports implicated the Under Secretary of the Colombian Embassy in Madrid, Gustavo Jacome Lemus, in a case involving smuggling cocaine into Spain through the Colombian diplomatic pouch. [redacted]

Spanish police authorities have speculated for many years that the Basque Fatherland and Liberty terrorist group (ETA) uses low-level traffickers as couriers, extorts money from traffickers, and traffics in drugs to finance its activities, but police have yet to establish a firm link between the terrorists and the drug trade. [redacted]

**Public Perceptions of the Drug Problem.** Public opinion polls indicate that Spaniards, including young people, have become very concerned about drug abuse and trafficking—particularly with respect to hard drugs—and this, no doubt, has contributed to the government's reassessment of the initially lax policies toward illicit drugs. According to US Embassy officials, drug abuse and trafficking consistently rank as major concerns in public opinion surveys. An OTR/Tiempo poll published in May 1985, for example, revealed that Spaniards under the age of 30 think that the three most pressing social problems facing Spanish society are, in descending order, unemployment, drug abuse, and inflation. A survey by the Directorate General for Youth released in January 1985 found that fully 50 percent of the youths interviewed opposed Article 344 of the Penal Code, which not only decriminalized the possession of a small amount of drugs for personal use but also relaxed punishment for traffickers. [redacted]

Another recent poll indicates that a majority of the respondents of all ages believe that the drug threat has increased and that drug abuse is a serious problem for the entire society. Respondents tended to distinguish, however, between hard drugs, which they believe posed a more serious health risk, and soft drugs such as marijuana and hashish, which were considered to be more benign. (According to Embassy reporting, neither the Spanish public nor government officials believe that use of soft drugs leads to use of hard drugs.) Opinion was divided over whether narcotics abuse is a crime or an illness, whether it requires mild or harsh punishment, or whether it requires voluntary or mandatory therapy. Nevertheless, on balance, Spaniards appear to favor additional and tougher government measures to reduce narcotics demand and supply, particularly measures against traffickers. [redacted]

#### **Domestic Control Policies**

Despite the 1983 relaxation of the penal code and decriminalization of the possession of drugs for personal use, efforts to curb drug trafficking through greater international cooperation and stronger enforcement continued. But, according to Spanish officials, they were hampered by the lack of adequate equipment and coordination between the National Police and the Guardia Civil, who share responsibility for narcotics interdiction. The interdiction of drugs remained only a secondary concern in any case as policymakers and enforcement agencies subordinated the drug problem to the more immediate threat posed by terrorist groups, such as ETA and the Maoist First of October Anti-Fascist Revolutionary Group (GRAPO). Moreover, because the Socialist government was initially unwilling to admit that a serious drug abuse problem existed, little effort was made to improve drug education, prevention, or treatment programs. By mid-1984, however, pressure had grown so strong from both the Spanish public and foreign governments that the Gonzalez government made an about-face and launched a major antidrug campaign. [redacted]

**Strengthened Control Measures.** The government's first steps were to name a special federal prosecutor for drug matters and to establish an interministerial antidrug agency—including the Ministers of Health,

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**Spanish Agencies With Drug Enforcement Responsibilities**

*Narcotics law enforcement is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. Within the Ministry, the Superior Corps (Cuerpo Superior) of the National Police is charged with coordination of Spain's anti-drug efforts. The Superior Corps includes the Central Narcotics Brigade (Brigada Central de Estupefacentes) which consists of some 730 men and is the main point of contact between US and Spanish officials in the narcotics enforcement field. The Director of the Central Narcotics Brigade is also the Director of the Interministerial Information and Intelligence Coordinating Committee. (The committee is composed of two additional inspectors, a physician from the Division of Mental Health of the Ministry of Health, a doctor from the National Pharmacy Directorate, a social service representative, and two officers of the Civil Guard.) The Superior Corps frequently calls on its subordinates in the National Police (Policia Nacional) to staff its antinarcotics efforts* [redacted]

*The Spanish Civil Guard (Guardia Civil), which reports to the Defense Ministry in times of war and emergency situations and to the Interior Ministry in peacetime, is a national paramilitary organization with numerous and diverse law-enforcement responsibilities. It serves as the enforcement arm of the Ministry of Finance in combating smuggling and in enforcing customs laws, since the Customs agency does not participate in enforcement activities. In this capacity, it has become involved in narcotics enforcement, and in the early 1980s it formed antidrug groups independent of the National Police. Embassy reporting indicates, however, that antinarcotics training for guardsmen has been rudimentary* [redacted]

*Customs has the principal inspection responsibility at Spanish ports of entry. According to Embassy reporting, Customs is increasing funds and expanding training in order to counter drug trafficking.* [redacted]

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Justice, Interior, and Labor—responsible for studying Spain's drug-related problems and suggesting measures to deal with them. The government also launched publicity campaigns warning Spaniards of the effects of drug abuse and committed additional resources for enforcement activities and prevention and treatment programs. [redacted]

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In January 1985, the special federal prosecutor announced plans to tighten supervision over seized narcotics from the time of interdiction to disposal, but Embassy officials are unsure if this has been implemented. In addition, in February 1986 the parliament approved the Police Reform Law, which is designed to carry out the first reorganization of Spain's police forces since the Franco regime. The law calls for the merger of the National Police and the Superior Corps into a new body called the National Police Corps (under the direction of the Interior Ministry) and increased coordination between the National Police Corps and the Civil Guard. The law also defines with greater specificity the roles of the national, local, and autonomous police units and of the Civil Guard; establishes a Council of Security Policy chaired by the Interior Ministry to improve law enforcement coordination and services; and gives the Civil Guard added functions, including those comparable to the functions of the US Coast Guard. [redacted]

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The centerpiece of the government's efforts against drug abuse and trafficking is the National Anti-narcotics Plan, formulated after extensive studies in the Senate and the special interministerial commission and approved by the Council of Ministers last July. Funded by grants totaling \$32 million, the plan:

- Created the subcabinet post of governmental commissioner to coordinate all counternarcotics activities, a position currently held by Miguel Solans Soteras.
- Called for revisions to the penal code to lengthen prison sentences for trafficking soft drugs from one month and one day to six months and for trafficking hard drugs from six months and one day to six years.

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**Government Officials With Antinarcotics Responsibilities**

*Minister of Health Julian Garcia is a long-time Socialist activist but is not considered a major figure; his appointment to the Cabinet in late July was a surprise. Garcia holds a degree in economics and has worked in the financial and fiscal policy offices of the Ministry of Economics and Finance. He had served since 1982 as head of the National Credit Office. His position on narcotics is currently unknown.*

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*Miguel Solans coordinates the efforts of the national and regional governments to fight narcotics abuse under the National Drug Plan. However, Solans, as a subsecretary, has limited authority in dealing with other ministries. Nonetheless, Embassy officers say he is able, ambitious, and determined to make the plan work. He successfully fought the local drug problem in his previous post as Civil Governor of Gerona (1982-85), working well with foreign officials and the Spanish police.*

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*Minister of Justice Fernando Ledesma is strongly committed to democracy and civil rights. In 1983, Ledesma helped carry out a sweeping reform of Spain's judicial system and penal code, including the relaxation of the penalties for possession of narcotics. Following a public outcry over rising crime rates, however, he adopted a tougher antinarcotics stance. In the past year, Ledesma has vigorously sought to increase US-Spanish antinarcotics cooperation and has told US diplomats that he is committed to fighting the "world cancer" of drug abuse.*

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- Established an interministerial commission against trafficking and consumption, including representatives from relevant government ministries and representatives from each of the autonomous regions.
  - Called for an increase in educational programs among school children to deter consumption and for stricter safeguards against the penetration of drugs into prisons and military units.
  - Called for a stronger role for the special anti-narcotics prosecutor by placing the sections of the police and Civil Guard that are dedicated to the fight against drugs under his control and giving the 50 regional prosecutors antinarcotics responsibilities.
  - Established a framework to restructure the Central Narcotics Brigade of the National Police by increasing its size from 378 officers to more than 730 in order to better coordinate the antidrug activities of the antinarcotics enforcement authorities.

Figure 4. Cocaine arrives on Spanish shores



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- Called for an increase in the number of medical personnel with specialized training for treating drug addiction, although not for the creation of specialized treatment facilities.
- Proposed a mechanism to provide services related to the integration of rehabilitated addicts into the mainstream of society.
- Called for the creation of new centers of instruction in seven universities to increase the volume of drug-related information and analysis.

Madrid has also taken measures to expand police training and tighten immigration regulations, which include residency laws and customs procedures. In addition, Spanish law concerning the conduct of sting operations has recently been revised, although government authorities are still prohibited by law from participating in a crime while posing as undercover agents. A sting operation can legally be used to assist narcotics operations, provided that: 1) officials can provide convincing evidence that an organization exists, 2) all other means of investigation have been exhausted, 3) it is certain that the organization is involved in trafficking, and 4) approval is obtained from the responsible local judicial authority.

**Mixed Results.** The government's recent spate of measures and proposals suggests that it has made a commitment to combat the drug problem. The

strengthened control measures are improving interdiction efforts and coordination among Spanish enforcement agencies. Cannabis seizures in 1985, for example, were up over 300 percent from the preceding year—largely because of one major haul cited below—while heroin and cocaine seizures increased by about 20 and 10 percent, respectively (see figure 4).

One of the most notable operations took place in April 1985, when Spanish customs agents seized a Panamanian ship in the Gulf of Cadiz carrying 60 kilograms of cocaine and 30 tons of cannabis with an estimated street value of 28 million dollars. Police claimed this was the largest haul of drugs in Spain's history. In the period June-October 1985, National Police and Civil Guard forces also raided and destroyed marijuana crops in several Spanish municipalities including Albacete, where over 1,100 marijuana plants weighing approximately 150 kilograms were destroyed.<sup>2</sup> In addition,

<sup>2</sup> Despite these incidents of illicit narcotics production and cultivation in Spain, we believe drug production there remains relatively small. The Spanish Government authorizes licit amphetamine production for domestic pharmaceutical needs as well as the planting of specified quantities of opium poppy: 6,691 hectares were authorized in 1984, and 5,289 were planted for domestic pharmaceutical needs, poppy-seed oil, and seed for bakery needs.

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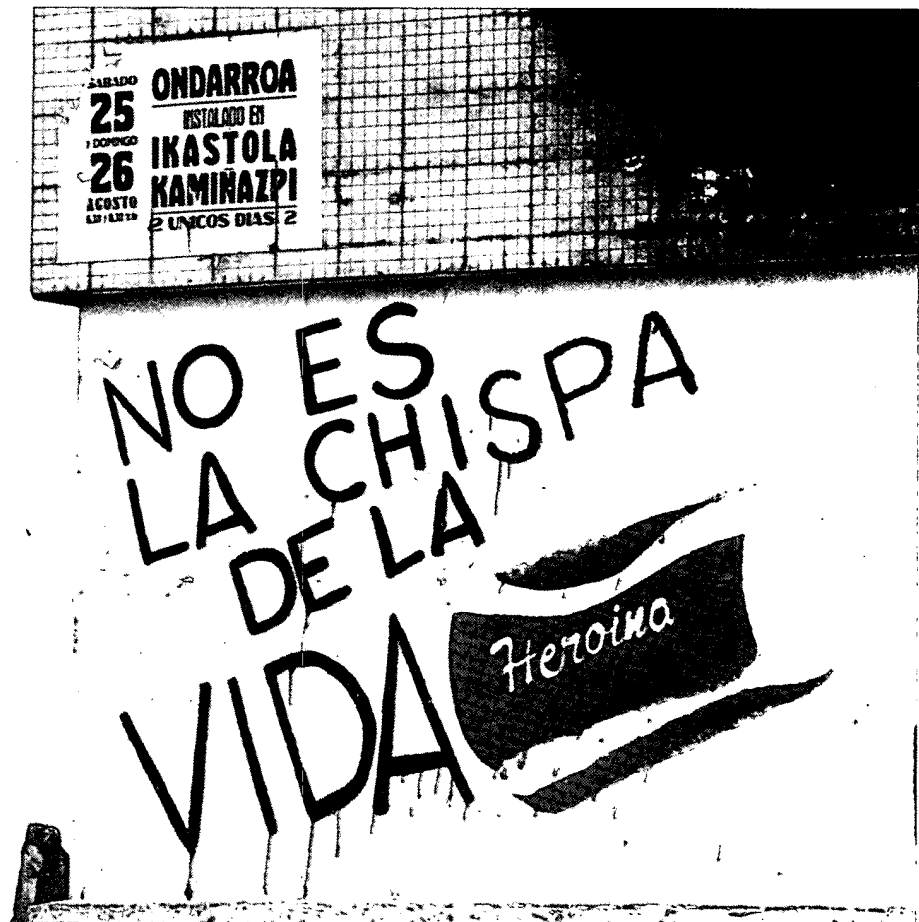
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Figure 5. "Heroin: It isn't the spark of life," an anti-drug abuse campaign ad

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6,000 traffickers were arrested in the first six months of 1985; authorities uncovered several international drug networks operating in Madrid, Barcelona, and Murcia and arrested their members; and several heroin and cocaine laboratories in Barcelona and Girona were discovered and dismantled.

plans to improve educational and media prevention programs and increased services for addicts are still under study. In addition, critics and political opponents complain that this plan takes a nearsighted approach to the drug threat, focusing too much attention on treatment and prevention and too little effort on enforcement and interdiction efforts.

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The proposals of the national antinarcotics plan have not yet been fully implemented, however, and no concrete results can be directly attributed to this program. To date, the proposed revisions to the penal code have not been passed. The special prosecutor, a position held by Jose Jimenez Villarejo until his resignation (submitted last October and accepted in April) and now held by Enrique Abad Fernandez, still lacks the authority to combat the drug threat. According to Embassy officials, it is doubtful that the antinarcotics enforcement authorities will be placed under his control. Embassy officials also report that

Even with the additional funds allocated for the fight against drugs, financial and personnel shortages remain major constraints. The Ministry of Health, with overall responsibility for the drug area, made a beginning in this field in 1981 by organizing study commissions, planning a nationwide network of private treatment centers, and instituting publicity campaigns for the general public. More recently, the Ministries of Interior, Education, and Labor have mounted an education effort aimed at secondary school children

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with courses, slides, cassettes, and manuals on drug abuse, but the media probably have provided the most extensively received information on the drug problem. According to Embassy reporting, Madrid spent \$2.3 million in 1985 on media spots directed at young people (see figure 5). [ ]

The government currently does not operate drug treatment centers, although plans to open such centers are now under consideration. The government does fund 126 detoxification beds in hospitals throughout Spain. Private groups such as the Red Cross, churches, and parents' organizations have sought on their own to establish full-time drug treatment centers of which there are now approximately 70. The privately operated centers are almost alone in offering long-term rehabilitation programs, although local governments such as Madrid's undertake to pay the expenses of participants in such centers. According to Embassy reporting, they have had a measure of success, although there are no available success/recidivism data to confirm this. Embassy reporting indicates that there is a growing reliance upon methadone treatment for heroin addicts (some 5,000 addicts are undergoing such treatment). This treatment is carried out under the supervision of physicians in the private centers, but, according to press reports, there is evidence of increasing methadone abuse [ ]

Political groups are also instituting antinarcotics programs. According to press reports, the opposition Popular Alliance party opened an information center for families of drug addicts last November and has plans to open 16 additional centers throughout Spain. The Socialist Youth, affiliated with the Socialist Party, has developed an antinarcotics plan and has been working with addicts since December 1985. This group is also planning to undertake an epidemiological study in Madrid to determine the actual number of addicts in the region. [ ]

The Basque autonomous regional government has taken the lead in primary and extended out-patient care. Some observers believe the region is in the forefront of tackling the medical aspects of the drug problem. Overall, however, the effort is only slowly becoming organized, and has had few concrete results to date [ ]

#### International Cooperation

As Spain's drug-related problems have worsened, the Socialist government has taken steps to improve its cooperation with other West European countries as well as with the United States on a bilateral basis and in international forums. Such improved cooperation and consultations, particularly with the DEA, have helped Spain to develop a more effective domestic control program. [ ]

Spain is party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotics, the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Single Convention, and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Although recent contributions by Madrid to the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control have been minuscule, it has played an increasingly active role in the United Nations' other drug control activities and was elected to serve a four-year term on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in May 1985. In addition, Madrid has provided to the UN Secretary General proposals to strengthen enforcement in the new convention on drug trafficking. It is also an active member of the Pompidou Group, the antinarcotics group of the Council of Europe, and continues to cooperate with INTERPOL. [ ]

Spain maintains close bilateral contacts with several West European countries on the drug problem. In March, Madrid signed a new extradition treaty with London, and in June it entered into a formal antinarcotics agreement with Rome. Enforcement authorities routinely cooperate with customs authorities in France, Italy, and Portugal; they also have cooperated with police in other countries such as the Netherlands on specific investigations. Spain's cooperation in the anti-Mafia campaign launched by the Italian carabinieri in cooperation with the US FBI and DEA was a key factor in the detention of the Badalamenti brothers in 1984. Madrid also has promoted the establishment of a tripartite commission on narcotics composed of officials from Spain, Italy, and the United States. [ ]

Over the years the DEA and Spanish enforcement agencies have developed a close relationship, and US officials report that cooperation and information exchanges with the Spaniards are excellent. Madrid has expressed interest in establishing a more formal

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mechanism for cooperation patterned after the US-Italian Working Group on Narcotics Trafficking and Organized Crime. Spanish officials also acknowledged in late October 1985 that they wanted to learn from the experience of US officials in the areas of health care planning and facilities management and to institutionalize information exchanges between the Spanish Ministry of Health and the US Department of Health and Human Services. Local government officials, most notably officials from the Basque region, also call on US officials to provide information concerning demand reduction programs and health care. [ ]

#### **Outlook and Implications for the United States**

The growing social costs of drug abuse and pressures from the public, the political opposition, and foreign governments are likely to persuade the newly reelected Gonzalez government to follow through on its commitment to try to bring drug abuse and trafficking under control. The magnitude of the problem and the government's limited resources and expertise, however, suggest that progress will be slow and halting, and that Spain will remain a major transshipment point for drugs bound for Western Europe and the United States. [ ]

To be sure, the government's shift to a tougher policy on illicit drugs has given counternarcotics officials more resources and authority than they had just two years ago to accomplish their mission. The drop in the number of drug-related deaths last year and the sharp rise in drug seizures is a good sign that this policy shift may be effective. The National Plan, with its emphasis on improvements in prevention, enforcement, treatment, and international cooperation will strengthen narcotics officials' hands still further if and when it is fully implemented. [ ]

The recently enacted Police Reform Law should improve coordination among law enforcement units responsible for narcotics interdiction. In addition, a proposed bill that is likely to pass parliament this fall calls for significantly tougher penalties for drug traffickers, providing the police and judiciary with a more effective tool to deal with such offenses. So, too, will the assets seizure bill, which will discourage much of the money laundering that now goes on in Spain. [ ]

These and other measures are likely to enjoy broad bipartisan and public support. The opposition parties to the right of the Socialists, which are philosophically more inclined toward a law and order approach, called attention to the narcotics problem in the runup to the June national election. They would be very reluctant to oppose a tougher antinarcotics policy and may well criticize the Gonzalez government for not going far enough. Public sentiment is also likely to remain in favor of a tougher policy toward hard drugs and trafficking, particularly if the government's educational and media campaign is effective. Apart from those on the far right of the political spectrum, however, there is likely to be little support within the government, the opposition, or the public to overturn the 1983 law which decriminalized the possession of soft drugs, such as hashish and marijuana, for personal use. [ ]

Even with tougher laws, more resources, and public support, however, counternarcotics officials will be hard pressed to make much headway in the battle against drugs. They will have to contend with a strong and growing demand for illicit drugs despite the stepped-up efforts to educate the public about the hazards of drug abuse. The growing worldwide oversupply of drugs, particularly South American cocaine, is likely, meanwhile, to force prices down still further and increase demand. It is also likely to inspire drug trafficking rings to concentrate even more on the lucrative West European market, including Spain. Their demonstrated ingenuity in finding ways to transport drugs together with Spain's porous borders and geographic location will continue to complicate law enforcement officials' efforts to curb the transshipment and trafficking of drugs. In any case, until enough officials receive the requisite training and expertise to deal with narcotics, Madrid will encounter difficulties in its antinarcotics efforts. Terrorism and the economy, moreover, still rank as more important priorities for the government, and it will continue to devote more of its time and scarce resources to them. [ ]

To some extent, the combination of assistance and pressure from Spain's neighbors and allies, particularly the United States, will strengthen Madrid's willingness and ability to confront the problem. Spain's

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status as a major transshipment center for drugs bound for the West European and US markets has created a coincidence of interests between Madrid and several countries, and these are likely to spawn greater bilateral and multilateral cooperation. According to the US Embassy, Madrid plans to enter into counternarcotics agreements with several countries similar to those with Italy and the United Kingdom, including Portugal, Morocco, and France.

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Spanish officials also want to expand bilateral cooperation with the United States, and talks toward that end are expected to begin later this year. The Gonzalez government's willingness to cooperate with US enforcement authorities indicates that the United States can expect continued and improved cooperation in the areas of information exchanges and assistance in drug investigations in Spain. Government officials stated several times, for example, that they favored extraditing trafficker Jorge Ochoa to the United States before the Spanish court's decision to send him to Colombia. Madrid's tougher policy and new measures against drugs may also reduce the supply of drugs available to US servicemen stationed in Spain. In addition, Spanish officials have recently supported US proposals in international antinarcotics forums, including UN drug commissions. We believe that Madrid will continue to support such proposals, which may influence other West European and some Latin American governments to support them as well.

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Madrid is, in fact, likely to look increasingly to multilateral cooperation as part of its more general turn toward Europe and other regions of the world after decades of isolation under Franco. As other countries have discovered, however, it is extremely difficult to enforce antinarcotics laws that so many people are willing to break. At best, we believe the government's counternarcotics policies will slow the increase in drug abuse and trafficking rather than reduce it substantially. The same holds true for the transshipment of drugs to Western Europe and the United States.

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